CENTRE STREET NORTH

STUDY MAY 1989

THE CITY OF CALGARY
PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT

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CENTRE STREET NORTH STUDY

MAY 1989

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INTRODUCTION

The Centre Street North Study was undertaken to identify methods to improve the interface between the Crescent Heights community and Centre Street traffic and development. As with many commercial strips adjacent to residential communities, there are problems in the residential area associated with traffic, parking, safety, incompatible uses and the height and density of new development. Since Centre Street will always carry high traffic volumes, there are no simple or final answers to this residential - commercial conflict. The traffic creates problems itself and also makes the street attractive for substantial commercial development. Implementation of the recommendations of this Study should improve the situation in the foreseeable future but monitoring of the impacts of Centre Street on the community must be on-going.

One of the most important questions the study participants addressed was - What is the future of Centre Street? Will it develop as a major commercial strip like Macleod Trail, as an extension to Chinatown, a pedestrian shopping area such as Louise Crossing or something unique, perhaps a near-downtown office strip? This attempt to predict the future gave no clear answers. As a result, the Study recommendations steer a middle course, essentially improving the rules which currently control development but not attempting to force a particular theme or future on the street.

Executive Summary

Major new development in a wide range of uses will continue to be welcomed along the strip and no restrictions on specific uses are proposed in the Study. Allowable heights and densities will be adjusted downward in some areas to protect the adjacent residential areas from overshadowing, loss of privacy and traffic impacts. Development guidelines are proposed which will improve the quality, attractiveness and convenience of new development to people walking and driving on Centre Street and people living in Crescent Heights.

Recommendations regarding parking, a basic problem in the area, encourage close adherence to the Land Use By-law parking requirements, and provision of short term parking in new development.

Through the study process business people from the Street north of 14 Avenue North, have shown interest in upgrading the pedestrian environment on Centre Street. The Planning & Building Department will be preparing street beautification concepts for review by commercial landowners.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The major recommendations of the Centre Street North Study are summarized below.

1. Commercial Land Use Designation

- South of 12th Avenue N., redesignations be undertaken to reduce the potential height and density of future development.

- North of 12th Avenue redesignations be undertaken to reduce the potential height of future development but the currently allowable development density be retained.

2. Commercial Development Guidelines

A series of guidelines relating to facades, parking, density relaxations and street furniture are proposed for new commercial development:

a. Rear Facade

1. Where the rear facades of new developments face onto residential areas, the facades should be attractively designed and finished.

2. Where parking is located behind a building and adjacent to residential development, the parking area should be fenced/screened.

b. Front Facade and Signage

1. New developments should contribute to an attractive pedestrian environment along Centre Street. New major office developments are encouraged to include retail stores opening onto the street. The enhancement of the private and public areas adjacent to new buildings with landscaping, street trees and awnings for example is encouraged.

2. Large signs scaled to high speed auto traffic which may obscure building facades and detract from the sidewalk environment should be discouraged in favour of higher quality, low profile signs.

c. Parking & Access

1. Short term parking should be provided and clearly signed. Although it is preferable to have such parking at-grade, no-charge underground parking could suffice if easily accessible.

2. Strip parking in front of retail buildings should be strongly discouraged. Short-term parking for office developments may be located in front.

3. The construction of new driveways (curb cuts) onto Centre Street should be minimized for traffic and pedestrian safety reasons.

4. Parking or loading areas accessed directly from Centre Street should be at least partially screened from public view although clearly signed.

5. Paving of the full length of the rear lane between avenues should be encouraged in new development applications.

d. Density Relaxations

1. In situations when an application for development provides one of the following public facilities the Approving Authority may allow development density in excess of the prescribed maximums:

a) an at-grade landscaped area, open to the general public, of at least 30 square metres above by-law requirements directly visible and accessible from Centre Street;

b) additional at-grade parking available to the general public (applies south of 12 Avenue only).

The amount of relaxation, if any, to be determined by the Approving Authority.

3. Parking

- The over-spill parking situation be monitored by the Crescent Heights Community Association.

- The Approving Authority be urged to consider the overspill parking impacts when considering the relaxation of requirements for commercial parking in new developments.

- The Approving Authority will encourage the provision of additional short-term parking in new developments.

4. Street Beautification

- The City Administration will work with area business people to prepare and implement street beautification plans.

- The City does not contemplate road widening in the 16 Avenue/Centre Street area within the next decade and encourages local merchants and landowners to undertake an upgrading of the pedestrian environment in the area.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

Preparation of the Centre Street N. Study was approved by City Council as part of the 1987 Civic Budget approval following a request by Alderman Tim Bardsley. The Study was to address a range of issues raised by Crescent Heights residents and area business people. These issues - parking, traffic, safety, future development - are not uncommon in Calgary and other cities where major roads travel through inner city communities. The challenge is to maintain and develop as pleasant a residential environment as possible within Crescent Heights while accepting the role of Centre Street as a major traffic corridor and commercial strip.

Study Area

The Study addresses the area lying between 1 Street N.E. and 1 Street N.W., from 7 Avenue N. to 16 Avenue N. as outlined in Figure 1.

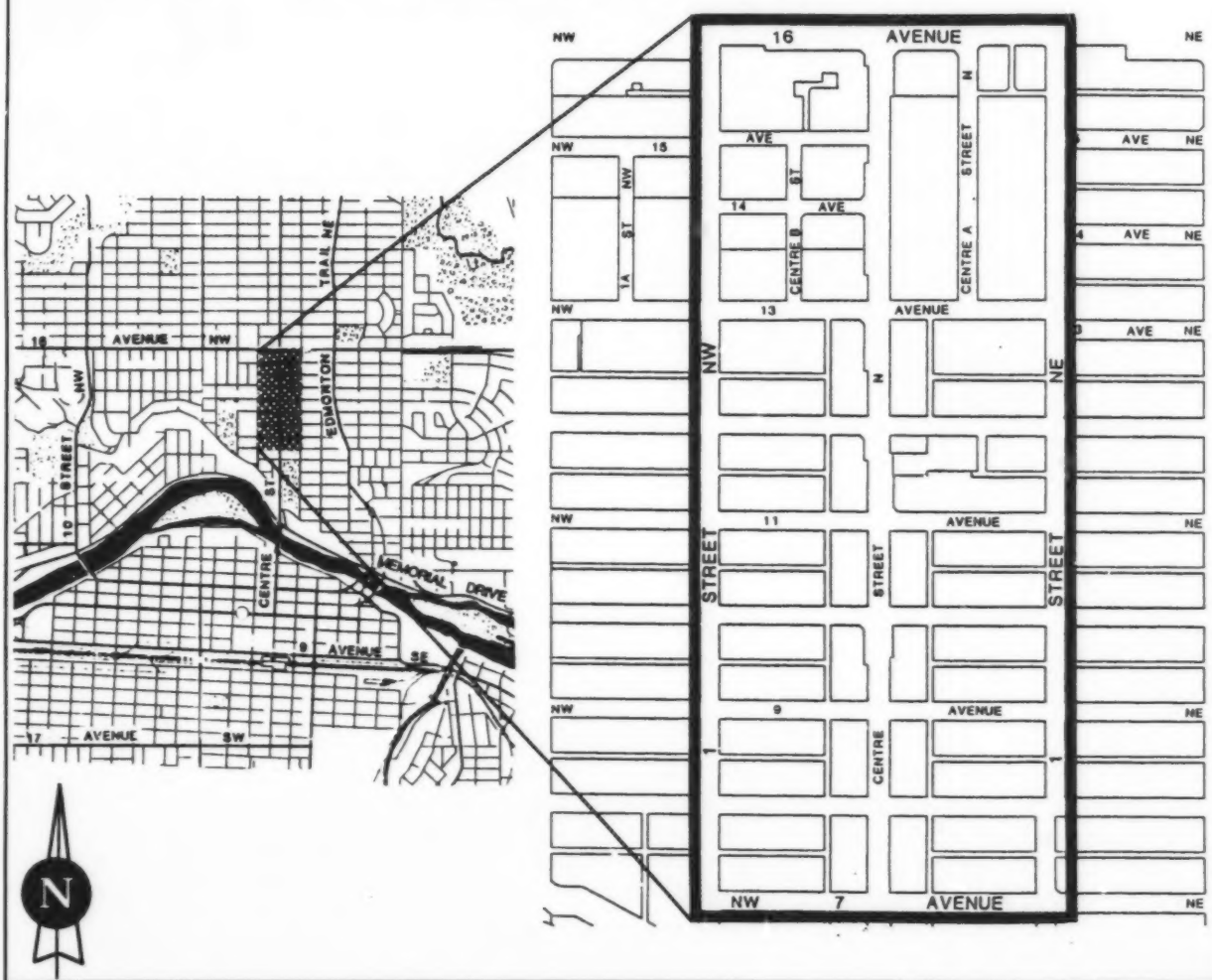

Fig 1 STUDY AREA

Traffic and Parking

Centre Street traffic has a negative impact on the Crescent Heights community and residents fear the impact may become worse in the future. The high traffic volumes, combined with the substantial commercial development potential and the grid road system in the community, create the potential for traffic infiltration, shortcutting and overspill parking on residential streets. Centre Street employees and shoppers parking along the residential streets and lanes is cited as a substantial current problem in parts of the community. Traffic congestion and safety concerns are also issues with area residents.

As traffic volumes slowly increase and new development occurs, the problems and the importance of restricting traffic to the commercial area and away from the community will increase.

Future Development

The commercial properties fronting onto Centre Street are currently designated C-3 which permits a wide range of commercial uses up to 46 m (150 ft.) in height and 3 F.A.R. (ratio of floor area to site area). New development built to these maximums could not only greatly contribute to parking, safety and congestion concerns but could have serious negative effects on nearby homes due to overshadowing, loss of privacy and general visual impact. Many residents feel that the recent office developments along the strip have been insensitive to the adjacent community.

The type of development (e.g., office, stores, auto sales) permitted is determined by the land use designation (zoning). Residents have expressed the desire for more locally-oriented retail outlets and fewer uses which attract regional traffic or create impacts in the residential community.

To respond to these concerns, the Study has addressed the question of allowable heights, bulk, and uses in new development.

Environment

There is clear consensus among interested residents and business people that the streetscape along Centre Street could be greatly improved. Community residents who see Centre Street as their "Main Street" urge that efforts be undertaken to reverse the run-down image of portions of the strip and make it a more attractive pedestrian area.

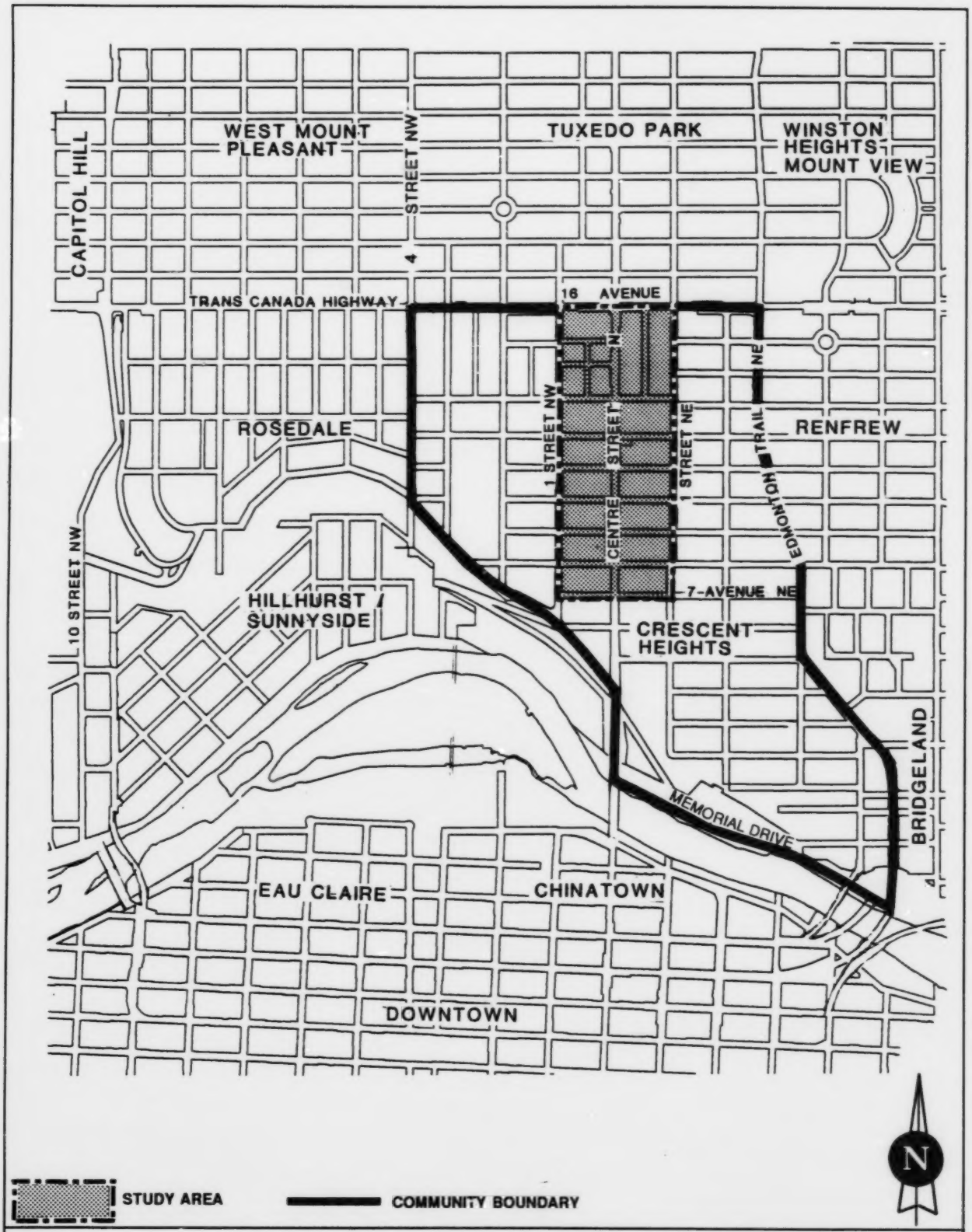

Fig. 2 ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

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2. EXISTING POLICIES AND CONDITIONS

2.1 Land Use Policies

North Bow Design Brief/North Bow Special Study

The Study Area is part of the area covered by the North Bow Design Brief, approved by City Council in 1977. In general terms, the Design Brief suggests that traffic generation and environmental impacts are key factors in assessing commercial development proposals within the North Bow area. Compatibility with adjacent residential development is also identified as an important aspect of site layout, parking, access and building design along major arteries such as Centre Street. Mixed use development and "transitional" densities, e.g. RM-4 and RM-2, are to be encouraged for the residential areas directly adjacent to commercial strips within the Design Brief area.

In specific terms, residential lands within the Centre Street study area were identified within the North Bow Design Brief as a "special study area" for purposes of establishing appropriate residential land use guidelines, in consultation with property owners and local communities. This study occurred in 1979, and much of the residential land was redesignated (rezoned), resulting in the existing residential land use designation pattern.

The Design Brief also encouraged a "pedestrian oriented shopping area" or development node within the commercial area at the southwest corner of 16 Avenue and Centre Street.

Inner City Plan

The Inner City Plan, approved by City Council in 1979, identifies Centre Street North between 10 Avenue and 16 Avenue as a "regional pedestrian oriented" commercial strip. The general guidelines established for this type of strip encourages a pedestrian oriented specialized shopping environment, with low bulk and height of new development, somewhat similar to the 17 Avenue and 10 Street/ Kensington retail areas.

2.2 Existing Land Use Designations

Figure 3 indicates the existing land use designations (zoning) within the study area.

The land immediately adjacent to Centre Street North and at the Centre Street/16 Avenue commercial node is currently designated C-3 (General Commercial). This designation permits densities of 3 times the site area (3 FAR) and heights of up to 46 metres (150 ft.). Some Direct Control District (D.C.) pockets are interspersed throughout the area for specific commercial purposes (See Figure 5 for D.C. guidelines).

The remainder of the land within the study area is residentially zoned and developed. North of 10 Avenue the land use designation is predominantly RM-2 (Residential Low Density Multi-Dwelling) and RM-4 (Residential Medium Density Multi-Dwelling) and south of 10 Avenue it is R-2 (Residential Single Detached and Duplex).

2.3 Existing Uses

2.3.1 Commercial

There are a mix of commercial uses along the Centre Street strip, (Figure 4), including a variety of retail, auto sales and service, and offices. There is some parking associated with almost all of the businesses and a 66 stall, no-fee Calgary Parking Authority lot is located on 15 Avenue west of Centre Street. Parking for the newer office developments is underground. The Brick and North Centre Inn, both with substantial parking requirements, have developed large surface lots at 16 Avenue and Centre Street. The Tai Fat Grocery at 14 Avenue has a large parking lot in the rear and attracts many shoppers, a large number of whom arrive by bus. The restaurants along Centre Street have their highest parking demand in the evening and at lunch, unlike offices and retail stores whose parking needs extend throughout the working day.

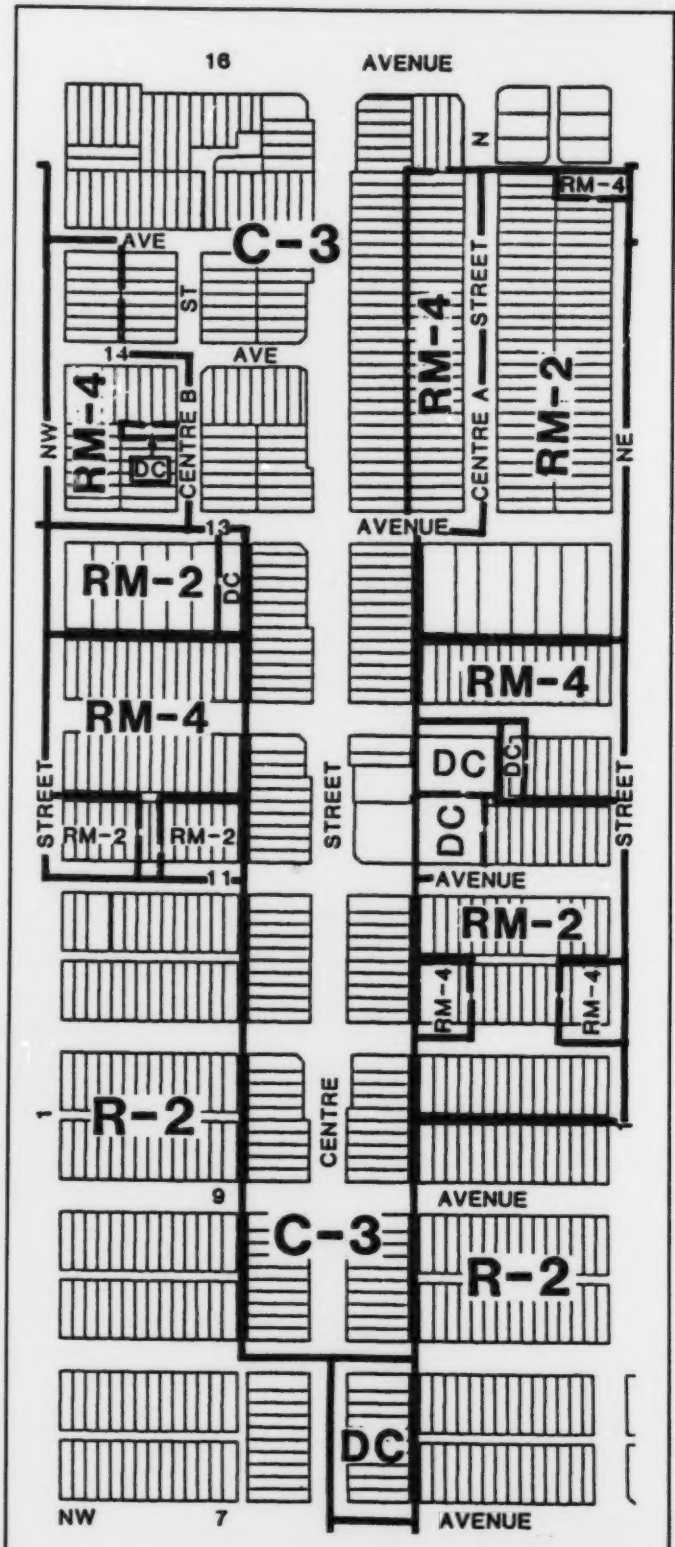
From the mid-seventies to 1982, the Centre Street commercial strip seemed to be in a period of transition from one and two storey retail businesses to four to six storey office developments with ground level retail. These latter developments had either underground or structured parking facilities while earlier commercial developments generally had surface parking to the rear. In the softer development climate currently prevailing development trends are unclear; the only recent developments being a single storey strip mall, improvements to some car dealerships and a muffler shop.

In a survey of businesses undertaken as part of the Study, it was clear that the auto-oriented uses (auto services) were doing particularly well along Centre Street while the other types of uses generally were experiencing a continuation of the loss of business which began in the recession.

There are five mid-rise office buildings built within the past 15 years in the study area. These buildings primarily contain a variety of small business offices rather than single large tenancies. The developments are in the range of 18 - 20 m (60 - 70 ft.) in height with an F.A.R. of between 2 and 3 (Figure 8). Unlike the residential development which increases in density toward the north of the study area, all of the office towers are south of 12 Avenue, closer to the Downtown. The area west of Centre Street and north of 13 Avenue is designated for commercial uses and contains a mix of low rise commercial and residential development.

2.3.2 Residential

Residential land uses are primarily single-detached, bungalow style, pre-war housing and some semi-detached development. Some more recent, low profile apartments and condominium/townhouse developments have been built within the RM-2 and RM-4 districts, but these are, for the most part, mixed with the original single detached housing. Generally speaking, built densities increase towards the northern portion of the study area, although even in that area the amount of original single family residential development is significant. West of Centre Street and north of 13 Avenue there is a mix of low profile commercial and residential uses although the area is zoned commercially. Several narrow lot 7.6 m (25 ft.) infill houses have been built in recent years possibly indicating a trend for future development.



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R-2	RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY DISTRICT (SINGLE DETACHED AND DUPLEX DWELLINGS)
RM - 2	RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY MULTI-DWELLING DISTRICT
RM - 4	RESIDENTIAL MEDIUM DENSITY MULTI DWELLING DISTRICT
C - 3	GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
DC	DIRECT CONTROL DISTRICT (Refer to Figure 6 For Guidelines)

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Fig. 3 EXISTING LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

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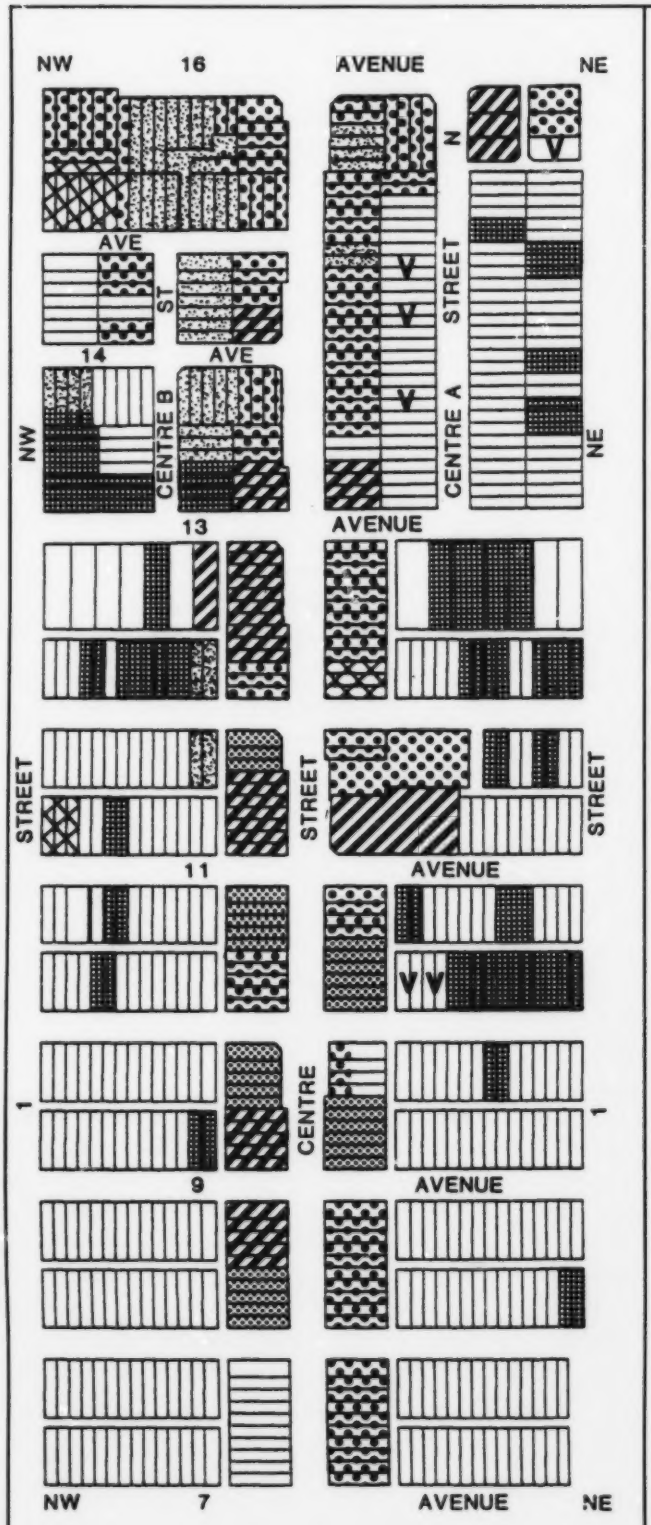

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- SINGLE FAMILY AND TWO FAMILY DWELLINGS (DUPLEX OR SEMI - DETACHED)
- MULTI - FAMILY DWELLINGS (TOWNHOUSE, CONDOMINIUM, APARTMENT)
- OFFICES
- AUTOMOTIVE
- RETAIL AND OTHER COMMERCIAL
- PUBLIC AND QUASI - PUBLIC BUILDINGS (CHURCH, SCHOOL)
- PARKING
- V — VACANT

N

Fig. 4 EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE

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Fig. 5 DIRECT CONTROL GUIDELINES

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By-law Number	Date of Approval	Address	Approved Use	Current Use
34Z87	April 13/87	814, 816, 818 & 820 Centre Street N.E. 104 & 108 - 7 Avenue N.E.	Local commercial uses with certain uses prohibited (Land Use Sec. By-law)	Retail Strip
8454	Jan. 10/72	1212 Centre Street N.E.	Autmotive service centre and automotive tunnel car wash	Service Station Car Wash
698	Sept. 11/78	Rear of 1214 Centre Street N.E.	Mixed commercial residential; commercial uses on main floor with residential uses on 2nd and 3rd floor	Parking Lot
335	Sept. 8/75	115 & 113 - 12 Avenue N.W.	C-2 guidelines to accommodate an office building	Offices
99Z87	July 20/87	109 - 13 Avenue N.W.	Storage of motor vehicles and appropriate signage	Storage

2.3.3 Other Uses and Surrounding Uses

A church is located on the east side of 1 Street N.W., just north of 11 Avenue. Although not within the study area boundaries, Crescent Heights Senior High School, located on the west side of 1 Street, north of 9 Avenue, does affect the study area in terms of traffic and parking.

The remainder of the surrounding lands are developed as detached single-family and duplex houses.

More strip commercial development exists north of 16 Avenue along Centre Street, exhibiting some similar characteristics to the low rise commercial developments within the study area.

2.4 Transportation Policies and Existing Conditions

Transportation By-law (3M82, 64M84) - Long Range Road Network

Centre Street is designated as a major road in Calgary's Transportation By-law (3M82, 64M84) and currently carries approximately 30,000 vehicles per day. Edmonton Trail, 4 Street N.W. and 10 Street N.W. are also major roads and may be used as alternate routes by some Centre Street commuters.

A north L.R.T. corridor is identified in the By-law. Functional studies are required to determine a route alignment. If the north L.R.T. route is constructed it may result in somewhat reduced volumes on Centre Street.

Although in the long term a north L.R.T. route could somewhat reduce Centre Street traffic there are no plans or expectations for road system upgrading in the foreseeable future that would lead to a reduction in Centre Street traffic. Volumes may in fact increase in the future with new development along Centre Street and generally throughout north Calgary. It is expected that the physical characteristics of the road will impose a limit on additional traffic volumes as congestion increases. Additional development along Centre Street could lead to substantial congestion associated with turning movements on a high volume roadway.

Transportation Improvement Priority Study - Update

The Transportation Improvement Priority Study (TIPS) (Calts #133 approved 1986 June 30) which establishes priorities for major road upgrading projects does not include any improvement in the study area for the next ten years. No major improvement (widening) has been contemplated for Centre Street although intersection upgrading could occur at 12 Avenue and 10 Avenue. However, since such upgrading would conflict with the lane reversal process presently in effect it is unlikely that it would occur in the foreseeable future.

Transportation studies have established the need for the upgrading of 16 Avenue from 6 Street N.E. to 4 Street N.W. at an unspecified time in the future (beyond 10 years). This project as currently envisaged would be very costly and would require the demolition of the Brick and North Centre Inn properties on Centre Street. While the effect of this upgrading on Centre Street traffic volumes would be minor, shortcutting through the adjacent community would likely be reduced.

Lane Reversal

A lane reversal program is currently in effect along Centre Street. During AM and PM rush hours, three lanes operate in the peak direction. This system is effective and workable as long as the counter-flow traffic volumes can be handled by the single lane available. When the counter-flow volumes on Centre Street exceed the single lane capacity, the lane reversal system will likely be abandoned. The system is currently working well and should remain viable for the foreseeable future.

Building Setbacks

There is currently a 3.81 metre (12.5 ft.) building setback from the property line along each side of Centre Street North. This property is required to ensure that adequate space is available to accommodate both future road upgrading and a satisfactory pedestrian right-of-way. There are no long range plans for the widening of Centre Street along its full length through the study area. Much more likely would be the widening of the intersection approaches and the addition of turning lanes at 12 and 16 Avenues.

Street Closures

The Transportation Department is currently working with residents of the 7 Avenue N.W. area in an attempt to reduce short cutting traffic through traffic management techniques which could include a full or partial closure of the avenue.

2.5 Parking

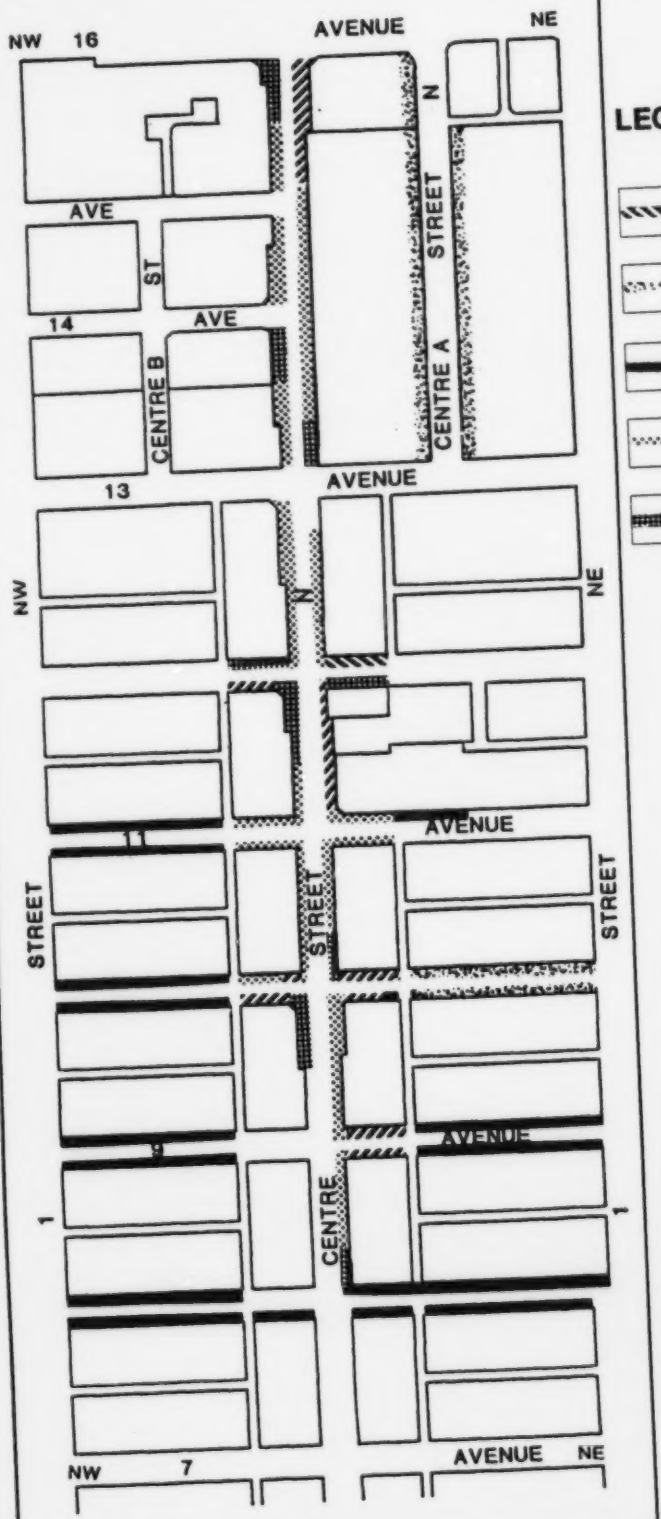
Commercial parking spilling over into the community was one of the main issues leading to the preparation of this Study. Surveys of residents and businesses indicated varying levels of concern over this problem, with some areas of the community reporting no parking impact from Centre Street. In a number of cases it was noted that when the office buildings in the area were fully leased prior to the recession there was substantial overspill parking, but since the offices have been experiencing high vacancy rates, the parking problem has diminished.

Current parking policies are outlined on Figure 6. Parking on the residential streets in the area has historically served office and retail workers, visitors, shoppers and residents. These groups have differing parking needs and expectations which can conflict. As a result of area resident complaints, Residential Parking Zone "M" was created in the area in the early 1980's. Residents along most of the side streets have petitioned for parking restrictions to control the overspill parking and the situation has substantially improved. Recent parking ticket cost increases should further the effectiveness of the parking restrictions.

There is no on-street parking on Centre Street during peak hours when the lane reversal system is in effect. Adequate enforcement is necessary if the parking regulations are to be effective. Currently enforcement personnel visit the area on a daily basis.

Generally, there are fewer parking complaints from the northern part of Centre Street closer to 16 Avenue than from the southern area. This is likely due to the substantial parking supply available in the area, less residential development and the absence of office development. The southern portions of the strip lack any type of buffer between the Centre Street commercial development and the residential areas. In addition, there are no large parking lots and the houses generate substantial on-street parking themselves due to narrow lots, lack of garages and narrow lanes.

The potential exists for substantially more development along Centre Street which could increase the demand on the limited short-term parking spaces.



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- NO PARKING ANY TIME
- 1 HOUR PARKING
- 2 HOUR PARKING
- METERS
- BUS ZONE

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Fig. 6 PARKING POLICIES

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2.6 Safety

Pedestrian and vehicular safety is another major concern of area residents with the way Centre Street is currently operating. Residents feel that the high traffic volumes and speeds, poor sight lines and the lane reversal system combine to make crossing Centre Street a hazardous endeavour. The safety concerns are reinforced by the need for ease in crossing the street if a pedestrian shopping strip is to develop. The need for a pedestrian route across Centre Street at 14 Avenue between the east side bus stop and the Tai Fat oriental grocery on the west side of the street has also been identified.

As further development occurs along the street, the amount of turning traffic will increase the need for pedestrian and driver caution.

3. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Study Process

The evaluation of the problems and issues addressed in the Centre Street Study was undertaken by several groups. A community advisory committee made up of area residents and community association personnel held on-going meetings throughout the Study. Public meetings to which all area residents were invited, were conducted and several meetings of area business people and commercial landowners were held.

The residents in the area and a number of businesses were surveyed to determine the issues in the area and the depth and nature of concerns. A group of retail developers currently active in the Calgary market was convened to give expert advice on the development opportunities along Centre Street. From this wide range of participants a diversity of views were put forward as to the future of Centre Street and the best solutions to the traffic and development issues.

The recommendations proposed in this Study are the result of extended negotiation on the part of the community and the commercial landowners.

3.2 New Development - Land Use Designations and Development Guidelines

Through the study process the following objectives were established to guide development along Centre Street:

1. Reduce the potential for residential/commercial conflicts;

2. Protect the stability of the R-2 residential area;

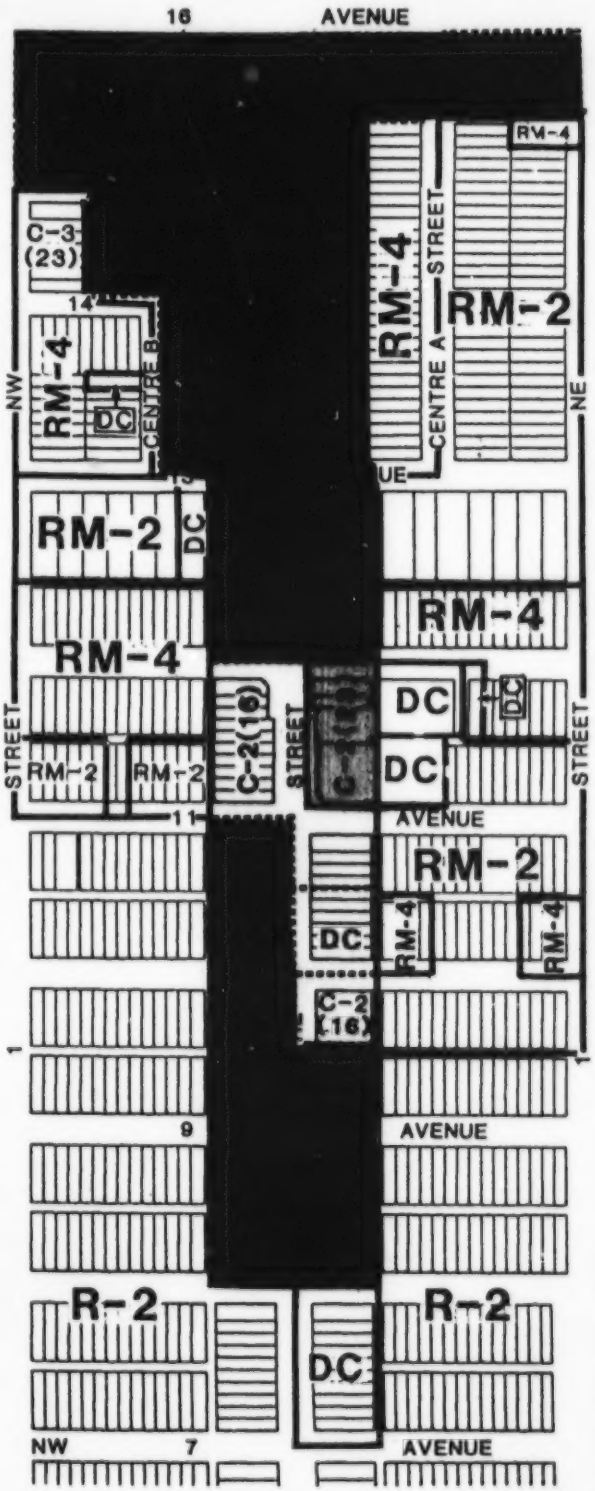
3. Allow for a gradual increase in density and height from south to north along the strip;

4. Encourage the creation of an attractive pedestrian environment.

The height, bulk and type of uses in new development along Centre Street will be determined in part by the land use designation (zoning). The current C-3 designation permits 46 m (150 ft.) buildings at F.A.R. 3.

Some of the development which has occurred has had substantial negative impacts on the Crescent Heights community and the potential exists for substantial new construction on underdeveloped sites. The photographs in Figure 8 illustrate the newer office developments in the Study area and describe their height and density.

The potential impact of new developments is the rationale for recommending changes from the C-3 land use designation. In addition to the visual and shadowing impacts on nearby homes, the amount of pedestrian and vehicular activity which would be generated by new development at the current densities will definitely affect nearby residences.



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EXISTING DESIGNATION
(No Amendments Approved)

R - 2	SINGLE DETACHED AND DUPLEX DWELLING DISTRICT
RM - 2	RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY MULTI DWELLING DISTRICT
RM - 4	RESIDENTIAL MEDIUM DENSITY MULTI DWELLING DISTRICT

PROPOSED DESIGNATION

C - 2 (12)	GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
C - 2 (16) C - 2 (23)	GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
C - 3 (23) C - 3 (30)	GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
DC	DIRECT CONTROL DISTRICT

PROPOSED DESIGNATIONS

	AREA A	C - 2 (12) & DC
	AREA B	C - 2 (16) & DC
	AREA C	C - 2 (23)
	AREA D	C - 3 (23)
	AREA E	C - 3 (30)
	AREA F	C - 3

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Fig. 7 PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

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3.2.1. Land Use Designations (Zoning) - Height and Density

To achieve the objectives listed above with minimum impact on the commercial landowners, the compatibility of the existing residential and commercial designations was evaluated. Figure 7 divides the commercial strip into sub-areas for discussion purposes. In Area A the C-3 commercial area is adjacent to an R-2 residential area, in Area B it is adjacent to RM-2, in Area C south of 12 Avenue it is adjacent to other commercially designated land, in Area D it is adjacent to RM-4 and in Area E the C-3 strip is bounded by other C-3 lands.

Area A (South of 11 Avenue N. on the west side of Centre Street, south of 9 Avenue N. on the east side)

In Area A the C-3 designation is adjacent to R-2 - the designation which allows single family and duplex development. Some of the commercial sites in Area A have been developed in the past 15 years to densities in the range of 2-3 F.A.R. and to heights of 70 feet.

The maximum height of 46 meters (150 ft.) permitted in C-3 districts has been considered excessive in other areas of Calgary when in such close proximity to low density residential development. Along the Centre Street strip the negative impact of the newer office buildings on the nearby homes has been substantial. In considering alternative designations the following elements were evaluated:

- shadowing caused by the development (usually 18-21 m) on adjacent residential development;
- loss of privacy for residential development;
- visual impact of medium to high rise commercial buildings;
- traffic generation and parking impacts.

In Area A the 3 F.A.R. density as well as the height permitted by the C-3 district is considered excessive and a C-2(12) designation (F.A.R. - 2 times site area) with a maximum height of 12 metres - about 4 floors is proposed. This reduction in density and height could still result in commercial buildings overlooking and overshadowing nearby residents, but the impact will be substantially reduced. The density reduction will limit the parking and traffic impacts associated with future new development.

The Brown Building in Figure 8 is located on Centre Street in Area A. It is 11.9 m (39 ft.) high with an F.A.R. of 1.9 which falls within the proposed C-2(12) designation and provides an example of the scale of development possible.

Area B (between 11 and 12 Avenue N. on the west side of Centre Street, between 9 Avenue and 11 Avenue on the east side)

In Area B the commercial strip is adjacent to RM-2 residential areas. The RM-2 designation when utilized to its maximum allows either semi-detached homes on narrow lots or mixed townhousing/apartments. As in Area A, the C-3 designation requires modification if new development is to be compatible with future RM-2 development, therefore a reduction in height and density is proposed. The current 3 F.A.R. density maximum is recommended for reduction to 2 F.A.R. As well as reducing building bulk, this will reduce the amount of parking associated with new development. This is particularly important because the narrow width of the commercial strip along Centre Street in this area offers little opportunity for short term parking to be accommodated in commercially designated areas without causing negative residential impacts. Further north, in Areas C and D the commercial area is deeper and better able to buffer the residential areas. The 46 m (150') height maximum is recommended for reduction to 16 m (52') limiting the visual and shadow impact on adjacent residential development. The C-3 designation is proposed to be changed to C-2(16) in this area to implement these changes.

Area C (between 11 and 12 Avenue N. on the east side of Centre Street)

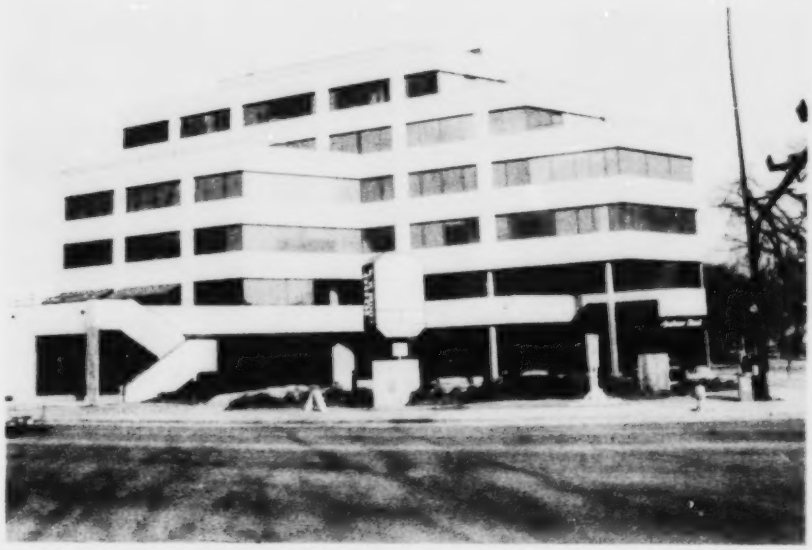
Area C encompasses the single block face on the east side of Centre Street between 11 and 12 Avenues. These properties will be subject to the proposed density reduction from F.A.R. 3 to F.A.R. 2. The adjacent properties to the east are commercial rather than residential however and the height related concerns addressed in Area B are reduced and a 23 m (75 ft.) height limit is recommended. The proposed designation for this area is C-2(23).

Area D (north of 12 Avenue and adjacent to residential land)

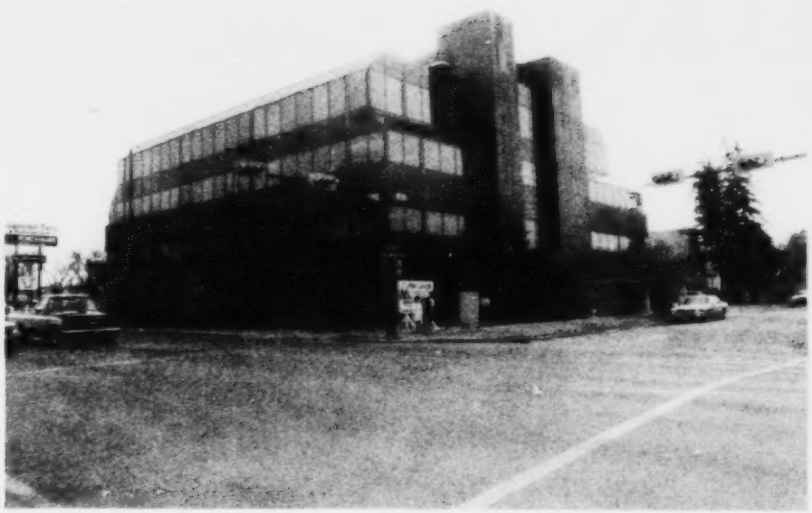
In Area D, north of 12 Avenue, the residential zoning adjacent to the commercial strip is RM-4 which permits low rise apartments at densities up to 148 units per hectare (60 u./ac.). Apartment development, when compared to lower density residential development, provides more opportunities for adequate on-site parking and has no requirements for private yard space. The traffic and parking impacts of commercial development in this area will be mitigated by the larger size of the commercial sites which provide opportunities for short term parking away from residential development. In addition, walk-up apartment development is less impacted by the surrounding built environment than the family oriented townhousing or detached homes of Areas A and B.

It is proposed that the 3 F.A.R. maximum density would be retained for this area. The maximum height of 46 m (150 ft.) allowed in the C-3 designation would be reduced to 23 m (75 ft.). This will have only a minor impact, if any, on future development as it is extremely unusual for C-3 developments to exceed 20 m (70 ft.) due to site size, economic and design constraints resulting from the 3 F.A.R. allowable density. The height reduction is being proposed to reduce visual, privacy and shadow impacts on existing residential. The office developments #2-#5 identified in Figure 8 are examples of projects that could be developed under these modifications.

Figure 8
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS



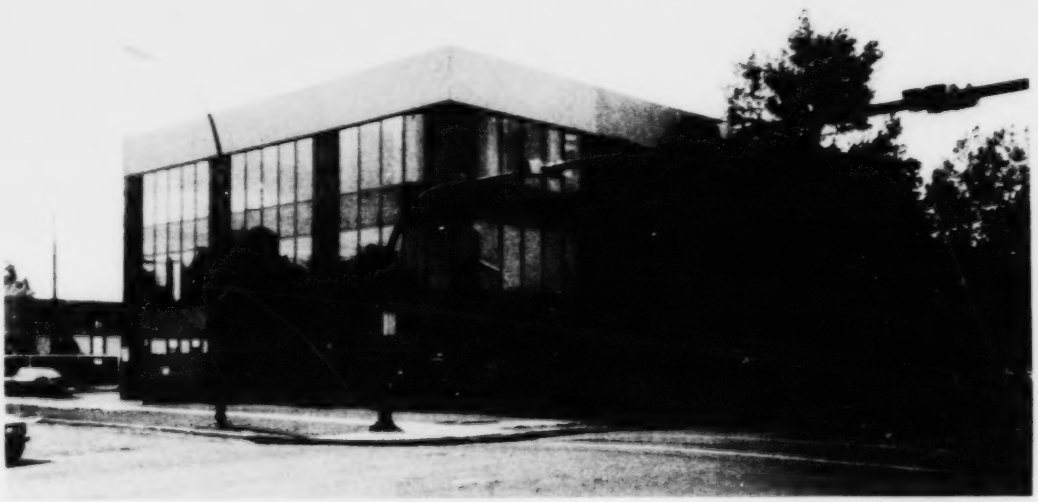
1000 CENTRE STREET NORTH
64 FT. F. A. R. 2.8



1015 CENTRE STREET NORTH
46 FT F. A. R. 2.5

Figure 8
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

1110 CENTRE STREET NORTH
66 FT. F. A. R. 2.7



BROWN BUILDING
901 CENTRE STREET NORTH
40 FT. F. A. R. 1.2

Figure 8
RECENT DEVELOPMENT

CRESTVIEW BUILDING

102 - 16 AVENUE N.W.

This building is just outside the study area but height of 75 ft. and density of 3 F. A. R. are an excellent example of the maximum development allowable under the proposed C - 3 (23) DESIGNATION.

New single story retail mall, the most recent development on Centre street.

Area E

The lands located at Centre Street and 16 Avenue were identified for a possible commercial node in the North Bow Design Brief. This study supports that concept and proposed that the C-3 density be retained. Generally, the maximum allowable height proposed is 30 m (98 feet) which would be extended south along the west side of Centre Street where the depth of the commercial parcels ensures little or no direct interface between this high-rise commercial zone and the RM-4 residential area. With respect to that portion of this area located between 13 and 14 Avenues, the Approving Authority may relax the allowable height to a maximum of 46 m (150 feet) for a comprehensively designed development, which, in the opinion of the Authority, will have minimum shadow impact on adjacent residential lands.

Area F

A significant portion of the property located on the southeast corner of 16 Avenue and Centre Street will be required by the City should City Council decide to upgrade this intersection. As Council has identified this property for consideration of acquisition it is appropriate that it retain its current designation until its long term disposition is determined.

Proposed D.C. Sites

There are four existing office buildings (#2-#5 Figure 8) which are recommended for redesignation to Direct Control with guidelines designed to accommodate the existing use. These buildings exceed either the height or density which would be permitted under the designation proposed for the adjacent properties. A Direct Control designation is necessary to avoid creating non-conforming uses.

Recommendation 1

The properties along Centre Street indicated in Figure 7 be redesignated in accordance with the policies recommended in the Centre Street North Study.

3.2.2. Uses

Two general types of land use allowable under the C-3 designation were the focus of substantial community concern:

1. Auto-oriented uses - auto body, sales, paint, services, specialties.

2. Uses with potential high-traffic or other impacts on the residential areas - funeral homes, lounges, hotels, private clubs (entertainment).

Discussion as to whether new uses of the above type should be permitted within the study area focussed on the future role of Centre Street, the likelihood of such developments occurring, and the ability and willingness of the Approving Authority to require and enforce development conditions to minimize the residential impact of such development. As a result of these considerations it was felt that the existing development approval process and market conditions combined to render any by-lawed restrictions on uses unnecessary and inappropriate at the present time.

Recommendation 2

That no changes be made to the uses allowed under the C-2 and C-3 designations for the study area.

3.2.3. Development Guidelines

In addition to the proposed changes in allowable densities and heights, guidelines are proposed to further improve new development. Developers and designers are encouraged to incorporate the relevant recommendations in new development proposals.

In considering how best to ensure high quality in new development along Centre Street, a balance between the auto-oriented role of the street and the pedestrian/ community element is necessary. It would be unrealistic to require new developments to try to create a low scale relaxed retail environment along the street. However, opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment should not be ignored. As well as creating greater amenity, pedestrian improvements can increase the attractiveness of the street for shopping and new development. As an important gateway to downtown the Centre Street streetscape also merits improvement.

The development guidelines recommended below would require the Approving Authority to encourage a pedestrian orientation to new development while acknowledging that auto uses will remain and possibly increase along Centre Street in the future.

a. Rear Facade

1. Where the rear facades of new developments face onto residential areas, the facades should be attractively designed and finished.

2. Where parking is located behind a building and adjacent to residential development, the parking area should be fenced/screened.

b. Front Facade and Signage

1. New developments should contribute to an attractive pedestrian environment along Centre Street. New major office developments are encouraged to include retail stores opening onto the street. The enhancement of the private and public areas adjacent to new buildings with landscaping, street trees and awnings for example is encouraged.

2. Large signs scaled to high speed auto traffic which may obscure building facades and detract from the sidewalk environment should be discouraged in favour of higher quality, low profile signs.

c. Parking & Access

1. Short term parking should be provided and clearly signed. Although it is preferable to have such parking at-grade, no-charge underground parking could suffice if easily accessible.

2. Strip parking in front of retail buildings should be strongly discouraged. Short-term parking for office developments may be located in front.

3. The construction of new driveways (curb cuts) onto Centre Street should be minimized for traffic and pedestrian safety reasons.

4. Parking or loading areas accessed directly from Centre Street should be at least partially screened from public view although clearly signed.

5. Paving of the full length of the rear lane between avenues should be encouraged in new development applications.

d. Density Relaxations

In situations when an application for development provides one of the following public facilities the Approving Authority may allow development density in excess of the prescribed maximums:

a) an at-grade landscaped area, open to the general public, of at least 30 square metres above by-law requirements directly visible and accessible from Centre Street;

b) additional at-grade parking available to the general public (applies south of 12 Avenue only).

The amount of relaxation, if any, is to be determined by the Approving Authority.

Recommendation 3

The Approving Authority will take the above development guidelines into consideration when reviewing proposals and encourage developers to ensure that new projects reflect the guidelines.

3.3 Parking

The primary tool to control overspill parking in the area is the residential parking zone regulations. The Transportation Department will be informing all landowners within a block of Centre Street of the parking zone regulations and reminding them that they may petition for more stringent regulations. Figure 6 illustrates the current regulations.

As new development occurs, the demand for short and long term parking will increase. Residential parking zone regulations can almost completely stop long term parking use of the residential streets; however, short term use, people stopping and running in to stores and offices to perform short errands can never be completely controlled. A combination of regulations and adequate enforcement are the most effective way of reducing this short term parking problem.

To ensure that parking and traffic problems are responded to as quickly as possible it is important that residents and the community association have clear lines of communication to the appropriate municipal authorities. It is much easier for the community residents themselves to monitor the parking problems in their area than for the City.

Recommendation 4

The Crescent Heights Community Association be encouraged to coordinate and monitor the overspill parking situation in the area and contact the Transportation Department with concerns.

3.3.1 Relaxations

It has become clear from experience in other inner city areas that relaxations to the By-law parking requirements granted to new developments can substantially contribute to parking problems. The Approving Authorities (Development Officer, Calgary Planning Commission, Development Appeal Board) are able to reduce the amount of parking a new development is required to provide below the maximum level established in the Land Use By-law provisions. This discretion is only exercised where site specific conditions make such relaxations appropriate. Such relaxations must be minimized when there are clear and immediate repercussions on surrounding development. The residential area south of 12 Avenue is particularly subject to overspill parking impacts.

Recommendation 5

In considering requests for relaxations to parking requirements for new development in the Study Area the Approving Authority is urged to consider the current and potential problems generated by over-spill parking.

3.3.2 Short Term Parking

As short term parking is a major cause of overspill parking, policies to provide more short term spaces are required. Transportation Department studies have indicated that in the range of 10% of the total number of parking spaces required by the Land Use By-law to be provided by offices are needed for short term use. The office buildings along Centre Street are occupied by a large proportion of small office service outlets, eg. lawyers, accountants, who attract substantial visitor traffic and increase the need for short term parking. Although people will pay for short term parking (through meters, controlled lots, etc.) the parking must be visible, readily available and well signed. If underground short-term parking is provided it would have to be free to have any chance of being used.

Recommendation 6

The Approving Authority encourage developers to designate approximately 10% of the parking spaces required by the Land Use By-law for new office developments as short term parking. This parking would preferably be located at-grade; however, no charge short-term underground parking, with signage clearly visible from adjacent streets may also be considered.

3.4 Safety and Traffic Management

No road improvements or pedestrian safety measures are proposed at this time although the need for turning lanes at 16 Avenue and 12 Avenue for traffic flow and safety improvement is noted.

The study area has been evaluated by the City Transportation Department and based on the existing City-wide rating system, no new pedestrian facilities are warranted. The situation will continue to be monitored by the Transportation Department. The major traffic flows are accommodated by Centre Street and 12 Avenue with a limited amount of shortcutting traffic. New development along Centre Street, possibly accompanied by multi-unit residential development, could in the future raise volumes on the residential streets to a point which requires consideration of new traffic management options. South of 12 Avenue, road closures and turn restrictions could be required in the future to protect the residential areas. In the higher density area north of 12 Avenue, a system of one way streets might improve traffic flow for residential and commercial users. Apart from the current consideration of traffic control measures for the intersection of 7 Avenue at Centre Street N.W., none of the above long-term traffic management strategies are warranted for implementation at this time or in the foreseeable future.

3.5 Street Beautification

As with many other commercial strips in the City, Centre Street could substantially benefit from a program to make the streetscape more attractive. The development guidelines listed above should contribute to an improved pedestrian environment adjacent to future development; however, there is a need to upgrade the existing streetscape.

The preferred method of initiating street improvements in this type of situation is through a business or landowner's association. Although there is no such organization in the study area for Centre Street, a number of commercial property owners between 14 Avenue and 16 Avenue have expressed interest in participating in an upgrading project. The Planning & Building Department will be working with these landowners and it is hoped that interest in such improvement projects will extend through the remainder of the study area. The property owners are concerned however that road widening in the Centre Street/16 Avenue area would result in the loss of possible new streetscape improvements. They have requested an indication that the City has no immediate plans to widen the roadway in the area. The Transportation Department advises that improvements to the intersection area which would impact streetscape improvements are not included in the Transportation Improvement Priority Study and are not scheduled or envisaged within the next ten years.

Recommendation 8

The Planning & Building Department be directed to assist with area business people and property owners in preparing streetscape improvement plans for implementation.

Recommendation 9

The City does not envisage road widening in the 16 Avenue/Centre Street intersection area within the next decade and encourages local merchants and landowners to undertake an upgrading of the pedestrian environment in the area.